

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

MAY, 1904.

DEAR EDITOR,

It has been suggested to me that a second letter from abroad would be acceptable.

After ten delightful weeks in Rome—and we were very sorry to leave even then—we went to Florence for a fortnight.

The journey from Rome to Florence was beautiful; the Campania looked lovely and purple as we left it behind, then we followed the beautiful Apennines nearly the whole way, with snow peaks appearing occasionally, and here and there we came to a lonely little village. Tuscan villages are all like the backgrounds of many of Perugino's pictures, little fortified towns picturesquely situated on the very top of a high hill, the slopes of which are covered at this time of year with silvery olive woods interspersed with glorious bright pink peach orchards. There were also sheets of lovely yellow and red wild tulips! The vineyards were very monotonous, but they, too, were relieved by the lovely blossoms of many cherry, peach and pear trees, as well as bright magenta-coloured "Judas" trees.

We passed Chiusi (the ancient Clusium), where we saw plenty of the "milk-white steers" of Macaulay's "Lays," ploughing the fields, very often yoked to a horse, which looks very odd.

After arriving in Florence, the first thing we went to see was the Piazza del Duomo, which has on one side the Baptistery—once the cathedral of Florence—a round building of black and white marble, with the beautiful, famous bronze doors of Ghiberti. In the centre of the piazza stands the Duomo designed by Arnolfo, which I think the most beautiful thing I have ever seen. It is Italian Gothic, and the outside is entirely inlaid in white, black and pink marbles; the whole effect is marvellous, so pure and fresh! The inside is very disappointing, the walls and ceiling being painted a dull grey

But men are now scraping the walls, and pieces of interesting but damaged frescoes are being discovered. What a sin to have painted them over!

Beside the Duomo is Giotto's Tower, a most lovely work, harmonising exactly with the former, but, if possible, more delicately executed. Of course we went a great many times to the Uffizzi and Pitti Galleries, which are quite bewildering at first on account of the enormous number of beautiful pictures.

Mrs. Firth's lectures came back very forcibly on seeing so many pictures about which she had talked to us, especially Fra Filippo Lippi's "Coronation of the Virgin," Botticelli's "Calumny," his "Fortitude" and "Spring," also Fra Angelico's "Paradise," with the pretty angels dancing on the wonderful flowery fields. The sweet "Madonna del Gran Duca" and the "Madonna della Seggiola" by Raphael, are both in the Pitti Gallery, as well as many interesting portraits by him.

We also went to a great number of churches, the most interesting of which were Santa Croce and Santa Maria Novella. The latter has beautiful frescoes by Ghirlandaio, scenes from the life of the Virgin Mary and of St. John the Baptist, as well as famous "Madonna" by Cimabue, and a large "Paradise" by Giotto and his pupils. Of course we went to the Spanish chapel in the cloisters of this church, where we saw our creed, "The Descent of the Holy Ghost." It is an enormous fresco, and takes up one entire wall and a quarter of the ceiling of the chapel. The outside of Santa Maria Novella is so pretty with its Tuscan black and white marble walls.

Santa Croce is even more interesting, as it contains beautiful monuments as well as frescoes. In this church, as in the Duomo, the frescoes on the walls have been plastered over with grey paint, but they, too, are being slowly uncovered. There is one very interesting chapel with frescoes by Giotto, representing scenes from the life of St. Francis, and the figures are wonderfully life-like for so early a painter. The monument to Dante (he is buried at Ravenna), with the words "Onorate l'Altissima Poeta!" is very fine, but Michael Angelo's tomb is much more beautiful with the three mourning figures on it. There are also monuments to Galileo, Machia-

velli, Sir John Hawkwood, the Duchess of Albany (wife of our Young Pretender), and many others.

I enjoyed immensely, too, our visit to the Convent of San Marco, with all its associations of Fra Angelico, Savonarola, and Fra Bartolommeo. In the fine old cloisters are the lunettes by Fra Angelico of "St. Peter Martyr" with his finger to his mouth, showing everyone who entered that "silence" was the rule of the Dominicans; also the one of "Christ meeting the pilgrims on the way to Emmaus." Upstairs there are twenty-four cells, each containing one fresco by Fra Angelico, many of them well known, such as "Meeting of Christ and Mary Magdalene in the Garden," "Transfiguration" and "Crucifixion." Savonarola's cell, where he spent his last night, remains still as it was in his day, with his old wooden crucifix, writing table and one chair, and his portrait painted by his friend, Fra Bartolommeo.

We made several expeditions from Florence; the one to Pisa was the most delightful. There, all the wonders are collected into one small space, the beautiful white marble Leaning Tower, the very fine cathedral, the Baptistery with its magnificent doors and famous pulpit by Nicolo Pisano, as well as the Campo Santo. The latter is most interesting; its very quaint old frescoes "The Last Judgment" and the "Dance of Death" by Orcagna, are wonderful and awful conceptions, but the drawing is very odd. In the former there are people being clawed by fearful monsters into everlasting fire and tearing their hair in despair and terror. In the "Dance of Death," there is a very gay company of ladies and gentlemen who have been hunting with falcons on their wrists, and above is a terrible monster of Death with a scythe just ready to destroy them. Above again, on one side, there are terrible demons and angels struggling to obtain possession of the same people, while on the other side there are pious monks continuing in peace their prayers, cooking, etc.

There were many other beautiful things we saw while in Florence, but my letter is long enough, so I only hope some of you will be as fortunate as I was, and will go to Italy some day.

F. WHITE.

8, LEUBRITZERSTRASSE,  
DRESDEN,

MAY 25TH.

DEAR EDITOR,

I am writing you a letter which I hope may find its way into the Students' Magazine if there is room. I am staying in this school in Dresden for this term, and it occurred to me that perhaps other students would like to know about my experience here, as it is a good way for anyone to learn German. I am here "au pair," and have to give two hours of English teaching on three days in the week, and take the girls to tennis on three afternoons. These three days are called English days, and the girls have to speak English on these days out of lesson hours. For this I get board and lodging, but of course no salary. However, when I am not "on duty" during the hours I have mentioned, I am quite free to do as I like. I can go to some of the German classes in the house and go out exactly as I like. There is one whole day—Wednesday—on which I have absolutely nothing to do. And on Saturday I have only two hours' conversation and tennis with the girls. So you see there is plenty of free time when one can give English lessons elsewhere at the rate of perhaps 1 mark 50 pfennings the hour. Anyone would be quite sure to get lessons to give in that way, and so make some money. I have heard of several girls who do so. People are so very anxious to learn English here.

I am writing all this because I thought perhaps some student might like to come out to learn German, which could be done quite perfectly in a year. Then the life here is delightful—so free; and one has the opportunity of meeting many people in different ways. Dresden itself, of course, is a lovely place. There is the Opera and Picture Gallery. One has the opportunity of taking the girls to the opera sometimes, I also take them to the Picture Gallery once a week, where a German lady lectures to them on the History of Art, and takes them round to see the pictures.

After leaving a post and before undertaking a new one, some student might like to come for a year and become quite proficient in the language, after which of course her services would be more valuable in England. It would be a delight-

ful change also, as the life is so different from that of an English governess in an English family.

The girls here are all German and always are. It is not a large school—only five this term; last term there were seven or eight. It has only been started a short time, so it has not had time to grow to larger dimensions. The house is a parterre étage of a villa in the above strasse, which is a beautiful avenue with trees on both sides and pretty villas standing in gardens on either side. It is a very nice part of Dresden and fifteen minutes walk from the Prager Strasse, which is the most fashionable street and the centre of the town. This house, and the life and feeding, are simple of course, but everything is nice and clean, although not elegant. The school is going to move to larger premises, if necessary, next term.

This "au pair" arrangement is very common in German schools, and I think it is nicer than being paid here, as one is so much freer. For when Germans pay, they don't pay much, and they wish to get a lot for their money.

The fare from London is a little more than £3 single, so that it would perhaps hardly be worth coming for less than a year.

I am only staying for this term, as I am going home to start studying for medicine in October, so if any student should think of coming out in autumn, I shall be delighted to send further information and answer any questions, if she writes to me here as soon as possible after the publication of the magazine, as I may leave soon after July 15th, which is the end of the term, and I do not know what my address will be for some weeks after that date. After September it will be 13, Athole Gardens, Glasgow, as usual.

I should add that the teaching one has to do is not at all hard. It is mostly conversational, grammar, letter-writing, and reading. I also have a literature class, when I have been talking to the girls about Shakespeare's plays, and telling them the stories of the plays; then they relate and write the stories afterwards. To read Shakespeare would be too difficult for them. In the same way we are going to have Tennyson and Wordsworth; they will be able to read some of the shorter poems of each.

And now, something about Dresden itself. It is a

beautiful, bright, sunny, clean town. I never saw such well-scrubbed streets—all paved. There seem to be always gangs of men sweeping and watering the streets. Many of the buildings are rococo—Baedeker calls Dresden the "Cradle of Rococo Art." The Hof-Theater, where the operas are given, and the Museum, part of which is the famous Picture Gallery, are Renaissance, and stand in a wide open Platz with flowers and trees at the side. This is a very flowery, bowery city. When I first came, about the end of April, there were masses of pink and white blossom everywhere on the fruit trees. The gardens were full of flowers, and the country round was a wonderful sight. Now is the time of horse-chestnuts and May trees. In summer there are tennis, beautiful walks, and excursions in the country round and on the river Elbe. In winter there are concerts, operas, lectures, skating, and splendid handicraft lessons at a good handicraft school at very moderate rates. The opera goes on from September till July; so that all the year round there are amusements and interests to suit the tastes of all comers. There is the beautiful Grosser Garten, where it is delightful to stroll about in the afternoon, and have coffee or tea; or to sit and read on a summer morning.

The shops are nice, and clothes are cheap—at least, about the same as London—if one goes to the right shop; of course there are other shops where the prices run up to any height.

Hoping this letter will be of some interest to the students.

Believe me,

Yours sincerely,

MARION M. KERR.